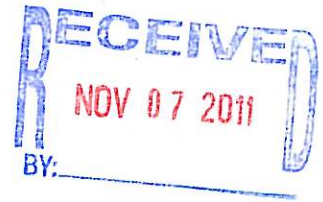




STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
TENNESSEE CORRECTION ACADEMY
P.O. BOX 1510
TULLAHOMA, TENNESSEE 37388
TELEPHONE (931) 461-7100 . FAX (931) 454-1940



October 12, 2011

Ms. Rebecca S. Markert, Staff Attorney
Freedom from Religion Foundation
P.O. Box 750
Madison, WI 53701

Dear Ms. Markert:

I am in receipt of your letter to me dated September 16, 2011. In that letter, you informed me of a complaint you received indicating that "a religious atmosphere dominates the training" at the Tennessee Correction Academy. Please be advised that I have looked into all of the specific complaints you have included in the correspondence, and I submit to you the following:

"We are told that last year there were bibles in employees' rooms and prayer while employees were in formation."

Response: There is a bible in most of the Academy's dormitory rooms. I understand that they were donated to the Academy by Gideon's International in 1984, the year in which the Academy opened. There is not, nor has there been, any mechanism established to furnish a bible to any of the rooms that no longer has one. I have been unable to verify that there has been, among our cadets, any group praying while they were on duty and in formation. I was informed, however, that approximately six weeks ago, there were a group of cadets who, prior to being on duty and prior to getting into formation, did either share either a prayer or an inspirational message.

"We also understand that there were religious postings in the gym."

Response: There are no postings of any kind in our gym. We did, however, find a local church directory listing posted in the building that houses the gym. That directory has subsequently been removed. No other religious postings have been found, and I am directing Academy staff to remove any such postings in the event that they should appear. Furthermore, I can assure you that neither our instructors nor any other Academy staff are engaged in promoting or participating in religious activities with the trainees.

Also, please be advised that as of October 2, 2011, a presentation which informs or reminds trainees of the separation between church and state has been added to all Academy orientation sessions presented to trainees shortly after their arrival.

I am hopeful that you find the afore-stated information helpful in your effort to respond to the complainant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sam DiNicola".

Sam DiNicola, Superintendent